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Trump election probe grand jury believes some witnesses lied

By KATE BRUMBACK
Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A special grand jury investigating efforts by then-President Donald Trump and his allies to overturn his 2020 election loss in Georgia says it believes "one or more witnesses" committed perjury and urged local prosecutors to bring charges. Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis should "seek appropriate indictments for such crimes where the evidence is compelling," according to portions of the special grand jury's final report that were released on Thursday. Those sections are silent on key details, including who the panel believes committed perjury and what other specific charges should be pursued. But it marks the first time the grand jurors' recommendations for criminal charges tied to the case have been made public.



Former President Donald Trump announces he is running for president for the third time at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Fla., Nov. 15, 2022.

Associated Press

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Trump election probe grand jury believes some witnesses lied

Continued from Front

And it's a reminder of the intensifying legal challenges facing the former president as he ramps up his third White House bid amid multiple legal investigations.

Trump is also under investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice for holding classified documents at his Florida estate.

The former president never testified before the special grand jury, meaning he is not among those who could have perjured themselves. But the report doesn't foreclose the possibility of other charges, and the case still poses particular challenges for Trump, in part because his actions in Georgia were so public.

Trump and his allies made unproven claims of widespread voter fraud and berated Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and Gov. Brian Kemp for not acting to overturn his narrow loss to President Joe Biden in the state.

Willis has said since the beginning of the investigation two years ago that she was interested in a Jan. 2, 2021, phone call in which Trump suggested to Raffensperger that he could "find" the votes needed to overturn his loss in the state.



Fulton County Superior Court Judge Robert McBurney speaks during a hearing to decide if the final report by a special grand jury looking into possible interference in the 2020 presidential election can be released Jan. 24, 2023, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

"All I want to do is this: I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have," Trump said during that call. "Because we won the state."

Trump has said repeatedly that his call with Raffensperger was "perfect," and he told The Associated Press last month that he felt "very confident" that he would not be indicted. In a statement on Thursday, he continued to assert he did "absolutely nothing wrong."

In fact, he claimed on his social media platform, Truth Social, that the release had given him "Total exoneration," though it did no such thing and portions having to do with recommended charges are still secret.

State and federal officials, including Trump's attorney general, have consistently said the election was secure and there was no evidence of significant fraud. After hearing "extensive testimony on the issue," the special grand jury agreed

in a unanimous vote that there was no widespread fraud in Georgia's election. The grand jury, which Willis requested to aid her investigation, was seated in May and submitted its report to Fulton County Superior Court Judge Robert McBurney on Dec. 15.

The panel does not have the power to issue indictments. Instead, its report contains recommendations for Willis, who will ultimately decide whether to seek one or more indict-

ments from a regular grand jury.

Over the course of about seven months, the special grand jurors heard from 75 witnesses, among them Trump allies including former New York mayor and Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani and U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina. Top Georgia officials, such as Raffensperger and Kemp, also appeared before the panel.

Graham told reporters Thursday that he has not been contacted by authorities regarding his testimony. "I'm confident I testified openly and honestly," he said.

The partial release of the grand jury's report was ordered Monday by McBurney, who oversaw the special grand jury. During a hearing last month, prosecutors urged him not to release the report until they decide on charges, while a coalition of media organizations, including the AP, pushed for the entire report to be made public immediately.

McBurney wrote in his Monday order that it's not appropriate to release the full report now because it's important to protect the due process rights of people for whom the grand jury recommended charges. □

Biden takes new steps to address racial inequality in gov't



President Joe Biden speaks during a meeting with the National Governors Association in the East Room, Feb. 10, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

By **JOSH BOAK** and **DARLENE SUPERVILLE**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Thurs-

day ordered the federal government to do more to address racial inequality as the challenges and complexities of systemic racism

are again drawing the public's attention.

The order, signed during Black History Month, requires that an initial review into long-standing disparities in government services and treatment that he ordered on his first day in office become an annual requirement for federal agencies. The reviews are aimed at increasing access to federal programs, services and activities for disadvantaged communities. The new order also directs federal agencies to have equity teams and name senior leaders who would be accountable for increasing equity and addressing bias. "My Administration has embedded a focus on equity

into the fabric of Federal policymaking and service delivery," Biden wrote in the order, adding that, "By advancing equity, the Federal Government can support and empower all Americans, including the many communities in America that have been underserved, discriminated against, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality."

Last month, Tyre Nichols, a Black man, died several days after he was severely beaten by five police officers following a traffic stop in Memphis, Tennessee. Nichols was one of several Black men across the United States who died after encounters with police

recently. The problem also extends to racial disparities in wealth, housing, crime and education that reflect decades of discriminatory policies. Chiraag Bains, the president's deputy assistant for racial justice and equity, said that the new order shows Biden is "doubling down" on the commitment he made on his first day as president "to put equity at the center of how this government operates."

The order institutionalizes Biden's pledge that government be open and accessible to all and "is a recognition that achieving equity is not a one- or a two-year project. It's a generational commitment," Bains told The Associated Press. □

California and Nevada may ban forced prison labor, servitude

By SOPHIE AUSTIN and GABE STERN

Associated Press/Report for America

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)

— Lawmakers in Nevada and California are advancing legislation to remove “involuntary servitude” from their states’ constitutions, a move that follows four states’ bans on forced labor that passed in ballot measures last fall.

The goal of these proposals is to remove exceptions from the states’ constitutions that allow forced labor as criminal punishment. The efforts come amid a growing push among some states to scrub outdated, century-old language from their state constitutions. Last fall, voters approved similar ballot measures in Alabama, Oregon, Tennessee and Vermont.

About a dozen states are pushing this year to get rid of the involuntary servitude exceptions, according to the Abolish Slavery National Network. Some advocates said this has major legal implications today, particularly in litigation related to prison labor pay and conditions.

It’s not uncommon for prisoners in California, Nevada and other states to be paid less than \$1 an hour to fight fires, clean prison cells, make license plates or do yardwork at cemeteries.

Samuel Brown, who was formerly incarcerated with a life sentence, helped



Steven Abujen, a California prison inmate with the Prison Industry Authority, cleans one of the newly installed headstones at the Mormon Island Relocation Cemetery, near Folsom, Calif., on Oct. 18, 2011.

Associated Press

author an anti-involuntary servitude amendment in California last year. He said incarcerated people can be forced to do work that is unsafe and puts their health at risk. Even more, he described how terrified he was when he had to disinfect jail cells after someone tested positive for COVID-19.

Brown said the amendment that is being reintroduced this year is long overdue.

“We have an opportunity to stamp it out once and for all. We’re not going to stop until we get it done,” he said.

The language allowing in-

voluntary servitude that still exists in more than a dozen state constitutions is one of the lasting legacies of chattel slavery in the United States. Colorado became the first state in recent years to revise its constitution in 2018 to ban slavery and involuntary servitude, followed by Utah and Nebraska in 2020.

Democrats in Congress have yet to pass federal legislation changing the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which states: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party

shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” If the latest attempt wins approval in Congress, the constitutional amendment must be ratified by three-fourths of U.S. states.

In California, more than 40 supporters of the measure gathered Wednesday outside the state Capitol, where lawmakers and formerly incarcerated people talked about the impacts of forced labor.

Assemblywoman Lori D. Wilson, a Democrat representing part of Solano County, is introducing this year’s

proposed amendment, hoping to have a different outcome than a failed attempt last year to pass similar legislation in the state. The Senate rejected it after Gov. Gavin Newsom’s administration warned that if inmates were paid the \$15-per-hour minimum wage, it could cost taxpayers \$1.5 billion a year.

“Slavery is wrong in all its forms, and California, of all states, should be clear in denouncing that in its constitution,” said Wilson, who chairs the California Legislative Black Caucus. It wasn’t until 1974 that the state Constitution was amended to read: “Slavery is prohibited. Involuntary servitude is prohibited except to punish crime.”

If the proposed amendment passes in the California Legislature this year by a two-thirds vote, voters would decide in November 2024 whether to adopt it. Wilson said she hopes conversations she has had with lawmakers about the economic impact of this amendment will help it get passed this year in the Legislature.

Meanwhile in Nevada, lawmakers voted unanimously Tuesday to move a measure that would change the state Constitution to ban slavery and involuntary servitude, which is prohibited “otherwise than in the punishment for crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.” □

Supreme Court won’t hear arguments Title 42 case as planned

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court says it will not hear arguments as planned March 1 in a case involving a Trump-era immigration policy used several millions of times over the past three years to quickly turn away migrants at the border.

The justices on Thursday removed from their calendar the case involving Title 42, which justified the quick expulsion of migrants on public health grounds.

A court spokeswoman pro-

vided no explanation and the case has not been dismissed. The court’s action follows a legal filing from the Biden administration saying the case soon will be moot.

Government lawyers pointed to President Joe Biden’s recent announcement that the emergency declarations tied to the COVID-19 pandemic will end May 11. The administration said the end of the public health emergency will also mean the end of Title 42.

Republicans and even some Democrats in border states have opposed Biden’s efforts to end the Title 42 policy.

They say the United States is not prepared for the expected influx of people who will come to the border with Mexico once the policy ends.

In December, the justices were deeply divided when they agreed to prevent the policy from ending pursuant to a judge’s order and they set the case for argu-



Light illuminates part of the Supreme Court building on Capitol Hill in Washington, Nov. 16, 2022.

Associated Press

ment. Five justices agreed to do so while four justices — the court’s three liberals and conservative Neil

Gorsuch — disagreed. The case itself involved the ability of states to intervene in a lawsuit over the policy. □

Black Hawk helicopter crashes in Alabama, killing 2 crew

By **KIM CHANDLER, LOLITA C. BALDOR and KIMBERLEE KRUESI**

Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP)

— A Black Hawk helicopter from the Tennessee National Guard crashed Wednesday in during a flight-training mission in Alabama, killing two crew members, the Tennessee National Guard said.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of two Tennessee National Guardsmen, and our prayers are with their families during this heartbreaking tragedy," Brig. Gen. Warner Ross, Tennessee's adjutant general, said in a statement. "We ask Tennesseans to join us in supporting their families during this time of unthinkable grief."

The helicopter crashed around 3 p.m. and caught fire, Ross said. The Madison County sheriff's office said there were no injuries to anyone on the ground when the helicopter crashed. "We have no survivors," sheriff's Investigator Brent Patterson said.

The UH-60 helicopter, more widely known as a Black Hawk, crashed along Alabama Highway 53 in the unincorporated community of Harvest, the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency said in a statement. The highway along which the crash happened passes



Law enforcement work at the scene of a Black Hawk helicopter crash Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023, in the unincorporated community of Harvest, Ala.

Associated Press

through commercial areas northwest of Huntsville that are bounded by subdivisions, forests and fields south of the state line with Tennessee.

Tammy Adams told WAAY that she was driving along Alabama 53 in Harvest when she saw the helicopter fall and explode on impact.

"We heard a very loud like a car without a muffler, but we knew it was in the sky. Looking up in the air, we saw the helicopter, and BAM! We hear it hit. We saw it hit the ground, and it exploded," Adams recalled.

I just hollered, 'My Lord! My God!' Because nobody could have survived that," she said.

Micheal Mclein told WAFF that he was on his way to pick up his daughter from school when he heard the crash. "As soon as it hits, you heard it, you seen the smoke," Mclein told the station.

Local news outlets showed large plumes of black smoke rising from the crash site. "It's a travesty because you know these guys go out here to put their lives on the line and fight for us and then you got this where

they're just flying and die like that? It's not the way it should've went."

The sheriff's office said in a statement cautioned residents that debris could be scattered across areas near the crash site, and asked residents to call authorities if they find any wreckage.

Harvest is just northwest of Huntsville, which is home to NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center and the U.S. Army's Redstone Arsenal. The once rural area has become increasingly suburban and is about 90 miles south of Nashville.

"Maria and I are deeply saddened by the tragic loss of two Tennessee National Guard members," said Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee on Wednesday. "Please join us in lifting their families up in prayer and support during this time of unspeakable grief."

A spokesperson for the Federal Aviation Administration referred questions to the military.

"Governor Lee, Alabamians will continue to uplift in prayer the families affected by this heartbreaking tragedy," Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey said. "The Guardsmen who lost their lives today will be remembered as heroes. The people of Alabama stand with our neighbors in Tennessee."

Over the years, a handful of Black Hawk helicopters were in crashes during training exercises.

In 2022 in Utah, whiteout conditions caused a Black Hawk helicopter pilot during a training exercise to lose sight of where he was trying to land, causing a crash with another helicopter near a Utah ski resort. None of men and women aboard the helicopter or the dozens of skiers nearby at the resort were injured.

In 2021, three Idaho Army National Guard pilots died when their Black Hawk helicopter crashed near Boise during a training flight. □



A tank car sits on a trailer as the cleanup of portions of a Norfolk Southern freight train that derailed over a week ago continues in East Palestine, Ohio, Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023.

Associated Press

By **JOHN RABY**

Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP)

West Virginia officials have reiterated that the state's drinking water remains safe following an Ohio train de-

railment that led to a toxic plume of chemicals being released.

Chemicals that leaked from the derailment are being monitored as they move down the Ohio River,

West Virginia drinking water still clear of derailment toxin

but they are not affecting the supply of drinking water, officials said during a briefing Thursday.

"We have not had any reports of this substance entering the water supply in any of the affected areas and there are no water advisories being issued at this time," said state Health Officer Matt Christensen.

About 50 train cars, including 10 carrying hazardous materials, derailed in a fiery crash Feb. 3 in East Palestine, Ohio. Vinyl chloride was later released into the air from five of those cars

before crews ignited it to get rid of the highly flammable, toxic chemicals in a controlled way, creating a dark plume of smoke.

Residents from nearby neighborhoods in Ohio and Pennsylvania were evacuated because of health risks from the fumes, but have since been allowed to return. Water samples were collected along the Ohio River on Wednesday from Ravenswood to Parkersburg, West Virginia. Parkersburg is about 170 miles (270 kilometers) southwest of East Palestine. The samples

detected butyl acrylate — one of the chemicals from the derailment — at levels below 3 parts per billion, said Scott Mandirola, the deputy cabinet secretary for the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. Federal guidance for drinking water has limits of 560 parts per billion, Mandirola said.

DEP spokesperson Terry Fletcher said in an email that vinyl chloride is among the compounds being tested for and "no detectable levels have been identified." □

U.S. launches artificial intelligence military use initiative

By MIKE CORDER

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) —

The United States launched an initiative Thursday promoting international cooperation on the responsible use of artificial intelligence and autonomous weapons by militaries, seeking to impose order on an emerging technology that has the potential to change the way war is waged.

"As a rapidly changing technology, we have an obligation to create strong norms of responsible behavior concerning military uses of AI and in a way that keeps in mind that applications of AI by militaries will undoubtedly change in the coming years," Bonnie Jenkins, the State Department's under secretary for arms control and international security, said.

She said the U.S. political declaration, which contains non-legally binding guidelines outlining best practices for responsible military use of AI, "can be a focal point for international cooperation."

Jenkins launched the dec-



Ukrainian soldiers check the situation by using a drone in Bakhmut, Donetsk region, Ukraine, Sunday, Feb. 12, 2023.

laration at the end of a two-day conference in The Hague that took on additional urgency as advances in drone technology amid the Russia's war in Ukraine have accelerated a trend that could soon bring the world's first fully autonomous fighting robots to the battlefield. The U.S.

declaration has 12 points, including that military uses of AI are consistent with international law, and that states "maintain human control and involvement for all actions critical to informing and executing sovereign decisions concerning nuclear weapons employment." Zachary Kal-

lenborn, a George Mason University weapons innovation analyst who attended the Hague conference, said the U.S. move to take its approach to the international stage "recognizes that there are these concerns about autonomous weapons. That is significant in and of itself."

Associated Press

Kallenborn said it was also important that Washington included a call for human control over nuclear weapons "because when it comes to autonomous weapons risk, I think that is easily the highest risk you possibly have."

Underscoring the sense of international urgency around AI and autonomous weapons, 60 nations, including the U.S. and China, issued a call for action at the Hague conference urging broad cooperation in the development and responsible military use of artificial intelligence.

"We are in time to mitigate risks and to prevent AI from spiraling out of control, and we are in time to prevent AI from taking us to a place we simply don't want to be," Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra said.

The call to action issued in the Netherlands underscored "the importance of ensuring appropriate safeguards and human oversight of the use of AI systems, bearing in mind human limitations due to constraints in time and capacities." □

China, Iran call on Afghanistan to end restrictions on women

BEIJING (AP) — China and Iran have urged mutual neighbor Afghanistan to end restrictions on women's work and education. The call came in a joint statement Thursday issued

at the close of a visit to Beijing by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi during which the two sides affirmed close economic and political ties and their rejection of Western standards of human

rights and democracy. Since taking over Afghanistan in August 2021, the Taliban has banned women and girls from universities and schools after the sixth grade and forced out those in elected offices and other prominent positions.

"The two sides ... called on the Afghan rulers to form an inclusive government in which all ethnic groups and political groups actually participate, and cancel all discriminatory measures against women, ethnic minorities and other religions," the statement said, adding that the U.S. and its NATO allies "should be responsible for the current situation in Afghanistan." The U.S. had backed Afghanistan's elected government against the Taliban, but withdrew amid the rising costs and dwin-

dling domestic support for a government that was unable to counter a Taliban revival. The call for women's rights is notable coming from Iran's hardline Shiite Muslim regime, which has been challenged by months of protests sparked by the death of a young woman in police custody for allegedly violating clothing requirements. The country's theocracy has executed at least four men since the demonstrations began in September over the death of Mahsa Amini. All have faced internationally criticized, rapid, closed-door trials. The bulk of the China-Iran joint statement emphasized strong political and economic ties, the quest for peace and justice in the Middle East and denuclearization in spite of Tehran's alleged drive to

produce atomic weapons. In a meeting earlier with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, Raisi expressed support for China's crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong and claim to self-ruling democratic Taiwan.

China and Iran portray themselves, alongside Moscow, as counterweights to American power, and have given tacit, and in Iran's case, material support to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"China supports Iran in safeguarding national sovereignty" and "resisting unilateralism and bullying," Xi said in a statement carried by Chinese state TV on its website. Xi and Raisi attended the signing of 20 cooperation agreements including on trade and tourism, the Chinese government announced. □



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, visiting Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, right, walks with Chinese President Xi Jinping after reviewing an honor guard during a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023.

Associated Press

Haiti at fore as Caribbean leaders tackle regional issues

By **BERT WILKINSON and DÁNICA COTO**

Associated Press

GEORGETOWN, Guyana

(AP) — Top officials from Canada, the U.S. and Haiti met Wednesday behind closed doors to talk about the spiraling chaos in Haiti, a topic expected to dominate an annual Caribbean trade bloc meeting that opened in the Bahamas.

The three-day Caricom meeting began Wednesday night, with host Philip Davis, the Bahamian prime minister, welcoming leaders of the 15-member bloc and others, including Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Brian Nichols, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs. Also attending are Haiti's foreign affairs minister and the acting minister of justice and public security.

A day before the meeting, Davis said at a news conference that Caribbean leaders "do not have the resources to deal with the Haiti problem ourselves, and we do need outside help. And we are looking to the north, Canada and the United States, to come to the fold to help."



Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau inspects an honor guard as he arrives in Nassau, Bahamas, on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023.

Associated Press

Davis and other Caribbean leaders have complained about a surge in migrants that they say is straining the budgets of small islands struggling with the influx of hundreds of Haitians. The vast majority are fleeing deepening poverty and a spike in violence, with killings, kidnappings and rapes rising as gangs grow more powerful following the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. At the meeting's opening, Davis said Haiti needs urgent attention as condi-

tions there deteriorate. "I pray that we can agree on a series of concrete steps to help move towards a solution for the Haitian people and the region as a whole. We have learnt that inaction has its own costs and consequences," he told the other leaders. Trudeau's entourage said the trip would allow leaders to consider political, security and humanitarian assistance for Haitians and "Haitian-led solutions to the current situation."

Emmanuel Dubourg, the only Canadian member of Parliament of Haitian origin, said the Canada's government is "discussing all kinds of options to help people in Haiti."

The Caricom meeting comes as Haiti's prime minister continues to seek the deployment of foreign troops, a request made in October that the U.N. Security Council has not acted upon. The U.S. and Canada, along with other countries, have sent military equipment and

other resources to Haiti's National Police, but have not pledged troops to the dismay and frustration of some.

Henry, Haiti's prime minister, tweeted that he and Nichols had "an important work meeting" Wednesday morning, but he did not provide details.

The Caricom meeting will continue until Friday, with leaders also expected to talk about food security, climate change and other issues affecting the region. Other officials attending the meeting include the U.S. special presidential envoy for the climate, John Kerry.

"Caribbean governments are looking for action, and it will be important that the United States delivers in what is expected to be a pivotal year for the relationship," Wazim Mowla, associate director and lead of the Caribbean Initiative at the Atlantic Council, wrote in a recent essay.

"With the challenges the region faces, the Caribbean no longer has time to wait on the United States for action and the United States can't keep putting it off." □

South Korea defense report revives 'enemy' label for North

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM**

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) —

South Korea called North Korea "our enemy" in its biennial defense document published Thursday, reviving the label for its rival for the first time in six years, as tensions worsen between the two countries.

North Korea conducted an unprecedented number of missile tests in 2022, including simulated nuclear attacks on South Korea. In response, South Korea's conservative government led by President Yoon Suk Yeol has been seeking a stronger U.S. security commitment and boosting its own military capabilities.

Descriptions of North Korea in past South Korean de-

fense white papers reflect the changing rocky ties between the two Koreas. Past South Korean documents called North Korea the "main enemy," "pres-

ent enemy" or "enemy" in times of animosity. But they avoided such references when relations were improved. North Korea "doesn't give up its nukes

and is persistently posing military threats to us, so the North Korean government and military ... is our enemy," the 2022 South Korean defense white paper issued Thursday said.

The document noted that in December, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called South Korea "our undoubted enemy" in a speech at a key ruling party meeting. It also cited the passage of a new North Korean law authorizing pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons in a broad range of scenarios. The document said the North Korean nuclear program and provocations "are seriously threatening our security." It said the main objectives of South Korean defense policies

include bracing for threats and a potential invasion by North Korea, deterring a war on the Korean Peninsula and contributing to a peaceful future Korean reunification.

North Korea didn't immediately respond to the revived use of enemy terminology in the South Korean defense paper, though it has lashed out at past such labels, calling them provocations that demonstrated South Korean hostility.

South Korea first called North Korea its "main enemy" in 1995, a year after North Korea threatened to turn Seoul into "sea of fire" rhetoric the North has since repeatedly used when confrontations flared with the South. □



South Korean army soldiers patrol along the barbed-wire fence in Paju, South Korea, near the border with North Korea, Thursday, Feb. 16, 2023.

Associated Press

Minister Dangui Oduber awarded with Destination Resilience Award

(Oranjestad)—On Thursday, CEO of Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A.), Mrs. Ronella Croes, presented the award for “Destination Resilience Award” to the Minister of Tourism and Public Health, Mr. Dangui Oduber. This recognition was given by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) to the island, recognizing Aruba’s resilience during the pandemic. This is the first time that this type of award has been granted to any country.

The award was presented during a ceremony in San Juan, Puerto Rico, as a part of CHTA Caribbean Travel Marketplace’s 40th anniversary.

Aruba was recognized for its management and its recovery programs which were implemented to allow visitors back on the island after closing its border during the pandemic. Aruba was awarded for its excellent management in making decisions and taking action during the pandemic that resulted in one of the best recoveries in the world.

The compiled documentations clearly show a range of other achievements as well, such as the digitalization of customs and the introduction of the Aruba Visitor Insurance. This was difficult yet successful work on Aruba’s part and A.T.A. is honored to have received this recognition. This was a merit for both the private and public sectors, and the entire A.T.A. team that work together for the wellbeing of our tourism. Minister Oduber is sure to be honored to receive this award; this further motivates him to keep up the good work for the wellbeing of the Aruban community. Aruba can be proud of this recognition, which honors the work and effort put in by the



Beauty & the Beach



Aruba Today is delighted to share to its readers a new segment called “Beauty and the Beach”, where we take a minute to honor our guests who have decided to spend their vacation on our beautiful and warm island.

In this edition, we’d like to give a shout out to Julia and her small Argentinean family of 4, who are enjoying their vacation on the beaches near Eagle Beach Resort. Aruba is always proud to host all families and guests. We at Aruba Today encourage any visitors of the island to send in their pictures and/or messages; who knows? You might get on the cover! □



Minister Geoffrey Wever prepares for business trip with merchants in Colombia

(Oranjestad)—A commission of Aruban merchants is preparing for a business trip to Colombia. The goal of this trip is to negotiate economic prices in the importation of goods, which consumers can in turn benefit from in the form of lower prices. This is an effort made by Minister Wever to improve the cost of living on the island.

The Minister of Economic Relations, Mr. Geoffrey Wever, is leading the preparations alongside a group of local merchants to determine a program and travel strategy. Aruba’s economy is small, and it is dependent on importation of many products. With a strategic position in the Caribbean between the US and Latin America, it is essential to explore trading opportunities that benefit both merchants and consumers. In this case, it is important for Aruba to fortify its economic relationship with other countries in the region.

The management of the economy by the Min-

istry of Economic Relations, Communication and Sustainable Developments is based on the maintenance and reinforcement of existing partnerships in the economic field. An important partner in achieving this goal is Aruba’s private sector.

It is for this reason that on February 22nd, 2022, Minister Wever—along with the Department of Economic Relations and Industry—organized a business roundtable on trade relations in Colombia with the private sector.

The goal for this meeting was to listen to the sector’s wishes, consider what opportunities the Colombian market has to offer, and how the government of Aruba can facilitate these. Aruba has a small economy, but with a strategic position, it must explore every trading opportunity in the region. In this case, Colombia is a strategy that seems promising. This meeting with the private sector shows the importance of working together with local merchants in the development of the island’s economy. □



LOCAL



The Hilton makes a generous donation to FPNC

Palm Beach—The Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino introduced the festive season Tree of Giving in 2020, as a way to give back to the community during the pandemic. Guests could contribute to the Tree of Giving, situated in the Aruba Tower Lobby, by purchasing a poinsettia plant throughout the month of December. All proceeds collected would go directly to assist island's food bank FPNC, Fundacion Pa Nos Comunidad, www.fpnca-ruba.com.

Continuing the meaningful tradition for its third year in a row, Hilton Aruba was eager to spread cheer last month, decorating the resort with the Tree of Giving. Just recently, the resort presented Gianaika v/d Biezen, director FPNC, and her team, with a generous amount collected in



December 2022. A total of Awg 4,361.00.

Throughout the month, the resort matched guest contributions on various dates, maximizing the total collected donations.

Fundacion Pa Nos Comunidad was founded in 2009, following Gandhi's view that poverty is the worst form of violence.

The foundation runs a food bank, a clothing bank and a furniture bank, and has

been active ever since. It played a major role during the pandemic when it distributed care packages to over 6000 families in the community.

Headquartered at club Kibrahacha, in the heart of the island, FPNC currently supports 250 families, down from 500 last year. This is due to significant reduction in island donations along with the higher priced goods as a result of inflation. Thus, Hilton's donation comes at a time to help the foundation maintain their commitment to these local families. □

Aruba to me



ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

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nies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. For today we received a lovely message from Brian Pope.

He wrote to us saying; "Aruba to me is heaven!"

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

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Aruba's underwater wonderland

ORANJESTAD - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.

Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

Antilla shipwreck



Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken world war two ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, especially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still many underwater wonders to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience.



Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □

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Travellers' Choice 2020

The CBA raised the reserve requirement rate by 0.5 percentage point as of January 1, 2023

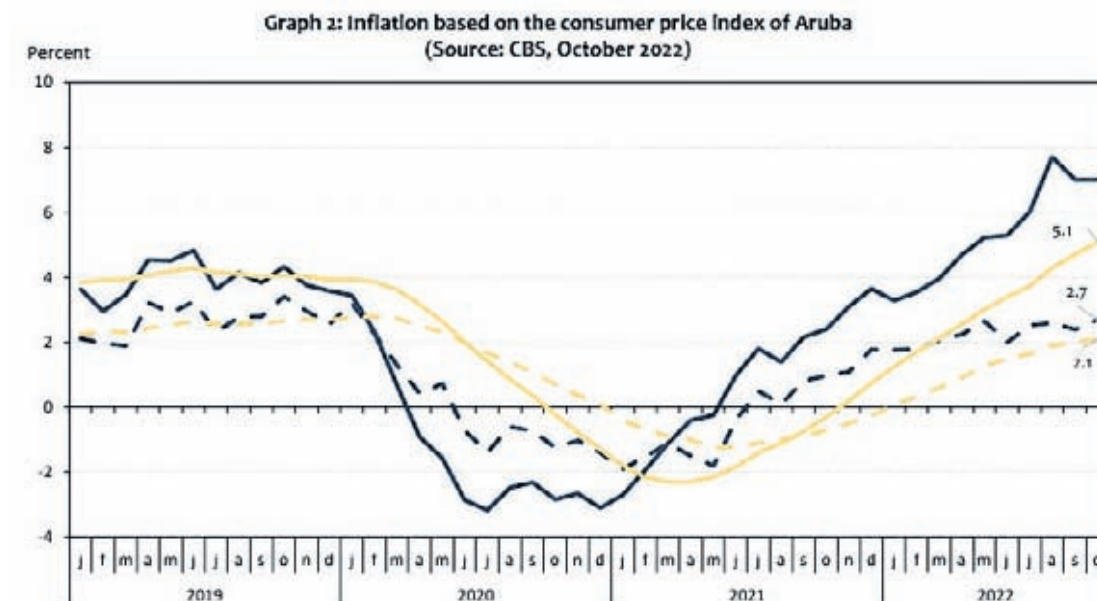
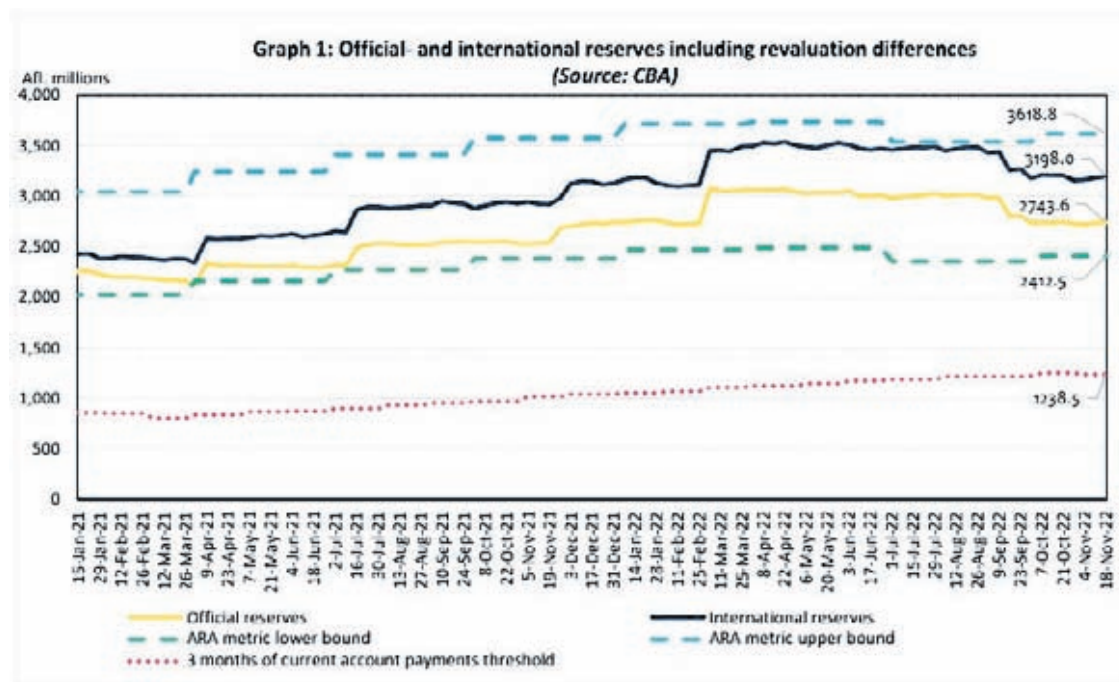
In line with the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) task to evaluate, direct, and provide transparency on the monetary policy actions of the Central Bank of Aruba (CBA), the CBA informs the following. During its meeting on December 16, 2022, the MPC decided to increase the reserve requirement rate by 0.5 percentage point to 25.5 percent as of January 1, 2023.

Accordingly, commercial banks must hold a minimum balance at the CBA equal to 25.5 percent of their clients' short-term deposits. The decision to raise the reserve requirement rate by 0.5 percentage point was based on the still ample level of excess liquidity at the commercial banks, that persisted well above the pre-pandemic level, and the diminished pace of decline in excess liquidity with preliminary data for November 2022 again recording an uptick. The 0.5 percentage point rise in the reserve requirement aims to ensure a gradual decrease of excess liquidity at all commercial banks, but the CBA is determined, dependent on the developments of excess liquidity in the coming months, to further increase the rate of increments, if deemed necessary.

The MPC considered the following information and analysis during its deliberations:

International and official reserves

The international reserves, comprising the official reserves of the CBA and foreign reserves held by the commercial banks, grew by Afl. 68.4 million (Graph 1) as of November 18, 2022, compared to end-December 2021. Official reserves contracted by Afl. 1.3 million, while the foreign reserves held by the commercial banks widened by Afl. 69.7 million. Consequently, as of November 18, 2022, official and international reserves stood at Afl. 2,743.6 million and Afl.



3,198.0 million, respectively.

Maintaining reserve adequacy is critical to keeping the fixed exchange rate between the Aruban florin and the US dollar. In this regard, the CBA anticipates international reserves to remain comfortably above the minimum required three months of current account payments.

Current account payments consist of import payments, interest payments made to investors, and foreign transfers such as money remittances by foreign workers, amongst others. Official reserves are forecasted to stay within an adequate range when benchmarked against the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Assessing Reserve Adequacy

(ARA) metric (Table 1).

Inflation

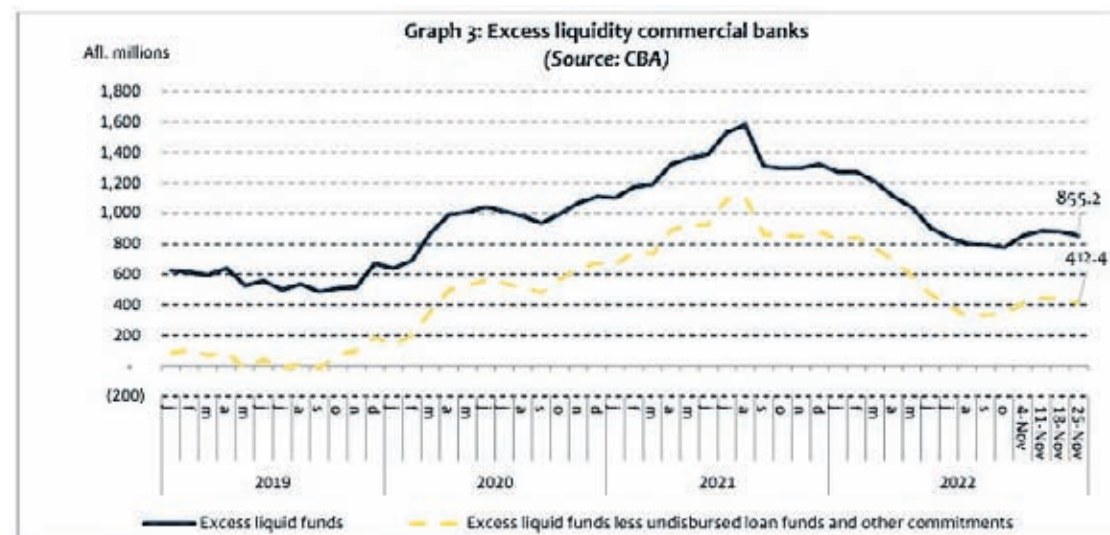
In October 2022, the consumer price index (CPI) jumped by 7.0 percent compared to the same month of the previous year (Graph 2), unchanged from the end-of-period inflation rate recorded at end September 2022. This jump in the CPI was caused by

higher utility prices, which affected the 'housing' component (2.9 percentage points contribution). Moreover, gasoline prices rose, mainly impacting the 'transport' component (1.6 percentage points contribution) and the 'food and non-alcoholic beverages' component (1.4 percentage points contribution).

The 12-month average inflation climbed from 4.3 percent to 5.1 percent in October 2022. The CBA estimates elevated inflationary pressures for the remainder of 2022, due to the elevated oil price in international markets, as well as the recent hikes in utility tariffs. Furthermore, the expectation is that Aruba will import much of the soaring prices from its export partners, particularly the United States and Europe. In October 2022, end-of-period core inflation (excluding energy and food) accelerated from 2.4 percent to 2.7 percent on a year-over-year basis. On a twelve-month average basis, core inflation amounted to 2.1 percent, up from 1.9 percent, at end-October 2022.

Commercial bank excess liquidity

Aggregated excess liquidity fell from Afl. 1,320.5 million in December 2021 to Afl. 778.3 million in October 2022 (Graph 3). This drop was principally due to the consecutive hikes in the reserve requirement in the period January 2022 up to and including July 2022. In October 2022, excess liquidity contracted further, although at a decreasing pace. Moreover, weekly data for November 2022 showed an uptick in excess liquidity. Furthermore, excess liquidity remained above the pre-pandemic level of February 2020 (+Afl. 89.2 million). The heightened level of excess liquidity resulted from the subdued credit expansion, the recovery in the tourism sector and further increase in deposits. □



Jerwin Giel 8 years after cancer diagnosis: “I want to be an inspiration for others”

(Oranjestad)—The world celebrated World Cancer Day this past Saturday. This is a day to raise awareness and prevention for a disease that many lose their lives to and that others overcome and keep fighting.

Jerwin Giel is one a young man who around 8 years ago, had to confront the hardest challenge of his life when he was diagnosed with cancer. In an interview with Bon Dia Aruba, he shared his story and provided in sight on his life after his fight with testicular cancer at a young age.

Giel said that everything started with a simple back pain. He was in and out of the doctor's office and received many medications for this pain, but nothing seemed to work.

After that, he realized that his sperm production became scarce, and during one of his usual work outs, he felt a pain he had never felt before. In that same week, Giel said that he went to the doctor and explained his entire dilemma. “When the doctor assessed me, his eyes widened after I told him I had been experiencing back pain for several months now,” he said.

He continued by saying that his general practitioner sent him to Dr. Moreta and asked him to do some blood work and make a CT scan of his back. However, Giel, young and rebellious, did not follow through with all his orders.

“I still remember the date, 13 or 16 of December I was in class and Dr. Moreta called to ask where I was. He told me to go to the hospital and take some pictures and bring them to him. That's when I knew that something was off,” he remarked.

After taking his pictures, he went by the doctor's office and that is where he received the news that he had stage 3-4 testicular cancer. “I told him to tell my family, because I'm a joker, and they wouldn't believe me if I told them,”



He indicated.

Giel explained that at the same time, the doctor told him to get ready to go stay in the hospital, as they would be operating the next day to remove the tumor. After his operation, Giel spent Christmas with his family at home and had to undergo chemotherapy treatment the next week.

Every chemo cycle took 21 days, and Giel had to undergo 4 in total. He indicated that for 5 days straight, he had chemo. During those 5 days, he had to stay in the hospital and receive three bags of chemo. Fridays were always the hardest.

“I always look for the good in bad situations, and I found out that on chemo day they give you whatever you want to eat, so

that became something I looked forward to. It was a way to make it bearable,” he recalled.

He shared that his body did not react badly to the first two rounds of chemo. He did however start to feel sick during the third cycle. He noticed his hair falling out and his lack of energy. “The chemo was so strong that I would taste it in my mouth and smell it whenever I went to the bathroom. It kills the bad cells, but also

the good ones,” He added. In terms of the physical effects of the chemo, he said that he felt them right away. From his first day of chemo, he noticed that his ears started ringing, like a firework went off right next to you. To this day, he still experiences this ringing.

“I see it as selective hearing now. Whenever I don't want to listen to someone, I just pretend that I can't hear them. Again, trying to see the good in all this,”

Giel said.

He remembers the first time his hair starting to fall off. He recalls that he was in class, and he decided the same day to shave it off. Giel told the newspaper about one of his fond memories during the new year, where they let him light a firework outside the hospital parking lot. “During the process, I would see the positive and I stayed a happy person on the outside, but inside I was actually becoming miserable,” he remarked.

After he finished chemo, Giel shared that he thought he was done, but two days later he was informed that he had to go to The Netherlands to operate. They did not tell him what type of operation it was in Aruba, but he found out when he arrived in The Netherlands.

“They told me that they would have to open me up to remove all of my lymph nodes, because they had become a teratoma. That meant that they found teeth, hair, nails etc.,” he stated.

Giel remarked that right before he entered the operation room, he cried for the first time. “I cried a lot, and I just couldn't stop, no matter how hard I tried. The nurses asked me to calm down, but I was hysterical; I just had to let everything out.”

Giel highlighted that even though he told his journey from his perspective, with a strong and positive mindset, he remarks that he could not have gone through it all without his supportive system. “I will forever be grateful for God and their help. I want to be inspiration for others. With a strong mindset, you can face any obstacle that comes your way.” □



CROSSWORD

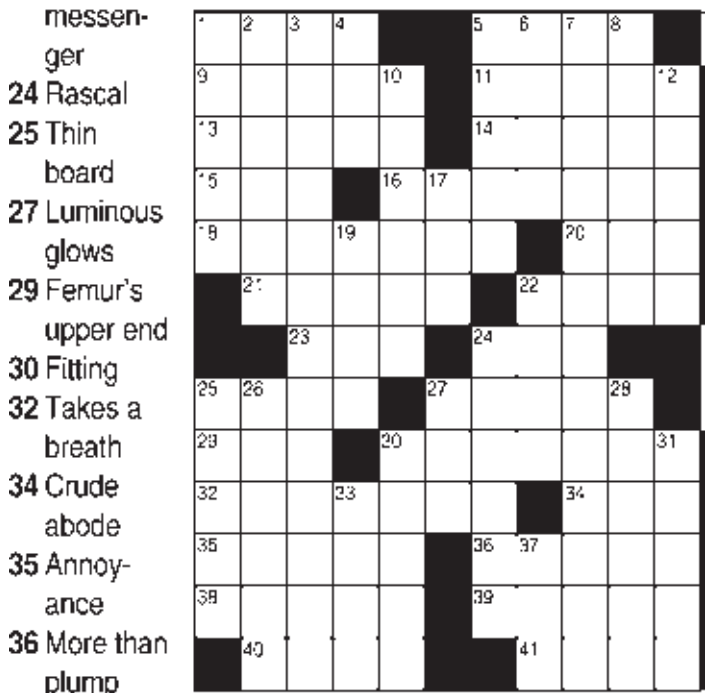
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 38 More certain
 - 1 Cuts off
 - 5 Doily stuff
 - 39 Less common
 - 9 Mood of the people
 - 40 Sibilant summons
 - 41 Org.'s kin

- DOWN**
- 1 Minimum amount
 - 10 Arizona city famed for its red rocks
 - 25 Armada makeup
 - 2 Parliament city
 - 26 Roster
 - 3 Shot takers
 - 27 Orangutan, e.g.
 - 4 Heir, at times
 - 17 Singer Orbison
 - 28 Drunks
 - 5 Burton of "Roots"
 - 19 Warning word
 - 30 Not drowsy
 - 6 Pub brews
 - 22 Franc's replacement
 - 31 Boat back
 - 7 Map-makers
 - 24 Screen sight
 - 33 Birds, to biologists
 - 8 Finish
 - 37 Sheep call



Yesterday's answer



2-17

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-17

CRYPTOQUOTE

AYQGZBU POWB GZB POX.

XOWBS FBQFYB ZOTB

YCGGYB QE XQ CXNYDBXAB

CX UQACBGK. — POEW GROCX

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: MUSIC EXPRESSES THAT WHICH CANNOT BE SAID AND ON WHICH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE SILENT. — VICTOR HUGO

What mortgage company changes mean for your home loan

By BARBARA MARQUAND
of NerdWallet

It's been a bumpy ride for mortgage companies lately. Some lenders have gone out of business, merged with other companies or narrowed their focus. And more changes are likely in 2023.

What does all this mean for borrowers?

Here are answers to common questions, whether you're shopping for a mortgage or paying off a home loan.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE SHAKE-OUT?

A key factor: higher mortgage rates. Demand for home loans plummeted last year as the Federal Reserve raised a key interest rate to control inflation and mortgage rates spiked in turn. The average for a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage doubled from near-historic lows in early January 2022 to almost 6.4% at year's end, according to Freddie Mac, an enterprise created by Congress in 1970 to support the U.S. housing finance system.

Higher mortgage rates shrink buying power, so elevated rates shut out some prospective homebuyers, already squeezed by eye-popping home prices. And for homeowners who had locked in historically low rates in prior years, the spike removed money-saving incentives to refinance their mortgages. Unless your primary aim is to cash out some home equity, it doesn't make sense to refinance to a higher rate.

As a result, fewer people applied for mortgages. Mortgage applications to buy homes dropped almost 40% year over year in the last few months of 2022,



A home with a "Sold" sign is shown, Sunday, May 2, 2021, in Surfside, Fla.

Associated Press

and refinance applications were down almost 90%, according to a December Mortgage Bankers Association forecast report. Higher rates also increased risk for banks and mortgage companies that buy mortgage loans from lenders.

WHAT IF MY LENDER GOES BUST?

Here's what would happen: If the lender that issued your loan goes out of business or goes bankrupt after the mortgage has closed, you'll be unaffected. The loan terms will stay the same. If the mortgage company that services your loan changes, you'll be informed of where to send your monthly payments. If your lender runs into trouble and can't fund the loan when you're a week or two away from closing, the company will likely work with you to find another lender, says Mark Indelicato, a bankruptcy attorney and partner with Thompson Coburn Hahn & Hessen in New York. "What I've seen so far in the industry is the players work

together to make sure that the borrowers themselves are not hurt," he adds.

Reali, a real estate company with an online lending arm, said in August that it was shutting down, and LenderFi said in an email in the fall that it was leaving the mortgage business.

Indelicato, whose firm is the lead counsel for unsecured creditors in the First Guaranty Mortgage Corp. case, does not expect to see a big wave of mortgage company bankruptcies.

"It's not so bad that you're going to see the wholesale bankruptcies like you saw of mortgage originators in 2007 and 2008," he says.

WHAT IF MY LENDER MERGES WITH ANOTHER COMPANY?

A merge will have little direct impact on you. Your loan terms will stay the same if your lender merges with or is acquired by another company.

Meanwhile, don't be surprised to hear more about mortgage company mergers. Stratmor Group, a mortgage advisory company based in Greenwood Village, Colorado, projected in an October report that almost 50 mergers and acquisitions would be announced or closed by the end of 2022, a 50% jump from 2018, the year with the next-highest number in the past 30 years. And the consolidation trend will likely continue this year. □

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Lonely tunes: Humpback whales wail less as population grows



A humpback whale breaches off the coast of Port Stephens, Australia, on June 14, 2021.

Associated Press

By **CHRISTINA LARSON**
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP)—Those melancholy tunes sung by humpback whales may really be a sign of loneliness. Scientists who tracked humpback whales in Australia noticed that fewer whales wailed to find mates as their population grew.

"Humpback whale song is loud and travels far in the ocean," said marine biologist Rebecca Dunlop, who has studied humpback whales that breed near the Great Barrier Reef for more than two decades.

As whale numbers dramatically rebounded following the end of commercial whaling one of the world's great conservation success stories she noticed something unexpected.

"It was getting more difficult to actually find singers," said Dunlop, who is

based at the University of Queensland in Brisbane. "When there were fewer of them, there was a lot of singing now that there are lots of them, no need to be singing so much."

Scientists first began to hear and study the elaborate songs of humpback whales in the 1970s, thanks to new underwater microphones. Only male whales sing, and the tunes are thought to play a role in attracting mates and asserting dominance.

Eastern Australia's humpback whales were facing regional extinction in the 1960s, with only around 200 whales left. But numbers grew and reached 27,000 whales by 2015 approaching estimated pre-whaling levels.

As the density of whales increased, their courtship changed. While 2 in 10 males were singers in 2004,

a decade later that ratio had dropped to just 1 in 10, Dunlop and colleagues report Thursday in the journal *Nature Communications Biology*. Dunlop speculates that singing played an outsized role in attracting mates when populations were severely depleted.

"It was hard just to find other whales in the area, because there weren't many," she said.

When whales live in denser populations, a male looking for a mate also has to ward off the competition, and singing may tip off other suitors, she explained.

"As animal populations recover, they change their behavior — they have different constraints," said marine biologist Boris Worm of Canada's Dalhousie University, who was not involved in the study.

To be sure, the seas are still noisy. Many humpbacks woo with a combination of singing and physical

jostling, the Australia researchers report.

"Such a big increase in animals over the time they were studying gave them a unique opportunity to get insights about changes in behavior," said Simon Ingram, a University of Plymouth marine biologist in England, who not involved in the study. □



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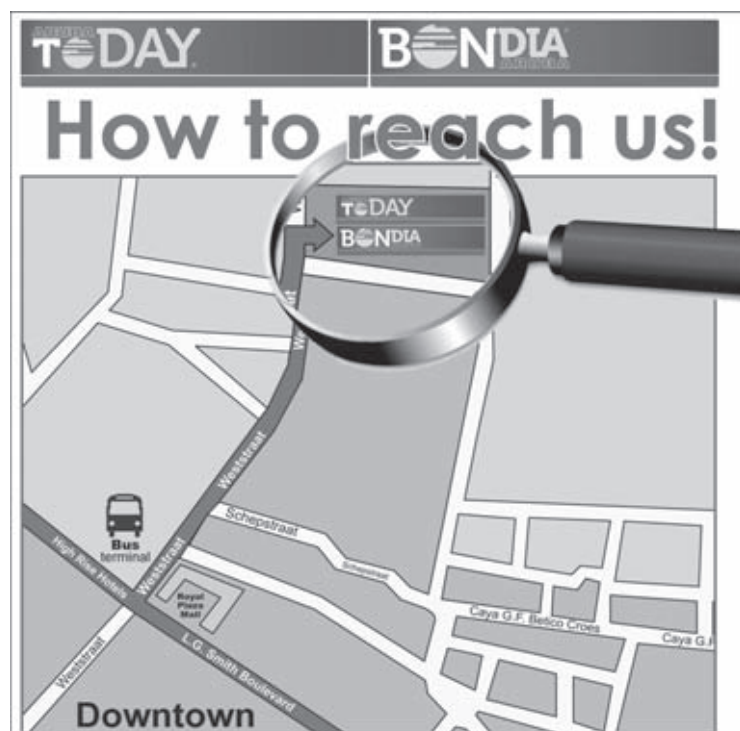
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'Marlowe,' with Neeson, resurrects a vintage gumshoe

By JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

The richly hard-boiled terrain of detective Philip Marlowe has always been, to quote Raymond Chandler, "a nice neighborhood to have bad habits in."

Chandler's Los Angeles gumshoe has stretched across some of the most fertile decades of American cinema, from Howard Hawks' seductively cryptic "The Big Sleep" (1946) to Robert Altman's "The Long Goodbye" (1973). Having been played by Humphrey Bogart, Dick Powell, Robert Mitchum and Elliot Gould, among others, he's less a character than a legacy to be passed down, like a cherished dark fedora.

But it's been a long time, almost half a century, since Marlowe was notably portrayed on the big screen. "Marlowe," with Liam Neeson as the private eye, is a reclamation project, a bid to recapture some old-school, tough-talking movie magic. And, intriguingly, "Marlowe" is not taken directly from Chandler. It's instead an original (albeit deeply faithful) interpretation of the character penned by William Monahan (screenwriter of "The Departed"), adapted from John Banville's 2014 book, "The Black-Eyed Blonde: A Philip Marlowe Novel."

The urge for imitation is an understandably strong



This image released by Open Road Films shows Liam Neeson in a scene from "Marlowe."

Associated Press

one. Who wouldn't want to write sentences like: "She gave me a smile I could feel in my hip pocket." And "Marlowe" seemingly has all the requisite trappings. Venetian blinds.

Femme fatales. The sinister underbelly of polite society. So why does — to paraphrase Chandler again — "Marlowe" mostly just kill time and die hard?

The film, which opens Friday in theaters, is a handsomely made period piece crafted with obvious affection for film noir by the veteran director Neil Jordan ("The Crying Game"), plus a top flight cast including Neeson, Diane Kruger, Jessica

Lange, Danny Huston and Alan Cumming. Yet "Marlowe," enveloped with a strong smell of mothballs, feels like an old pinstripe suit that's been taken out of the closet for no apparent reason. Neeson's Marlowe punches harder, but that's about all that distinguishes the film, which has made surprisingly little effort to reconsider Marlowe from a new perspective. Marlowe feels more like a mummy purposelessly raised from the dead.

The year is 1939, which happens to be when Chandler's flatfoot debuted on the page, in "The Big Sleep." We're back in early

Los Angeles, a still deeply intoxicating moment in pre-freeway California. Unfortunately, as delicious as some settings here can be — iced tea sipping on a veranda, a lush neon-signed nightclub — "Marlowe" was largely shot in Dublin and Barcelona, robbing the tale of possibly its most important character: Los Angeles.

Like countless private eye tales before it, "Marlowe" opens with a mysterious woman — Clare Cavendish, an Irish-American heiress — enlisting a detective (Marlowe, naturally) for a job. She wants him to find her lost lover (François Ar-

naud), a search that leads Marlowe to an exclusive members' club that has some very vicious things going on behind closed doors. It's overseen by the wide-smiling Floyd Hanson (a brightly brutish Huston), whose toothy grin barely disguises his underlying menace.

Like Marlowe, he's a veteran of the war, and if anything sticks in this stale tale, it's the way he shrugs off past horrors while carrying them into daily life. "We're alive and others are not, and it's a pleasant morning," he neatly summarizes to Marlowe.

What else works? Lange gets a few fine scenes as Cavendish's mother, Dorothy Quincannon, a former Hollywood star whose daughter was played in the papers as her niece, so as not to age her. There are some hints of a potentially absorbing mother-daughter femme fatale twist. But "Marlowe" lacks both a meaningful mystery for Marlowe or a narrative as lusciously oblique as "The Big Sleep." There are some decent stabs at visual poetry by cinematographer Xavi Gimenez but they blend into the film's sepia wash of yellow. The language occasionally pops — Cumming's gangster quotes from "The Elements of Style" — but those attempts feel forced. □



This image released by ABC shows co-host Kelly Ripa, left, and Ryan Seacrest on the set of "Live! With Kelly and Ryan" on Feb. 8, 2023 in New York.

Associated Press

By The Associated Press
NEW YORK (AP) — Ryan Seacrest has revealed he's

leaving "Live with Kelly and Ryan" this spring, saying he never expected to

Ryan Seacrest to leave 'Live with Kelly and Ryan' in spring

stay so long and thanking his co-host Kelly Ripa, who he jokingly called his "work wife."

Seacrest ends a six-year run alongside Ripa. His replacement will be Ripa's real-life husband, Mark Consuelos, and a frequent guest host. The show will be rebranded as "Live with Kelly and Mark."

"I'm going to miss my work wife and all the laughter we share," Seacrest wrote on Instagram. "When I signed on to host 'Live' in 2017 it was meant to be for

three years, but I loved the job and working with Kelly so much that I extended my time and last year I made the decision to stay on for one more final season."

Seacrest said he'll stay busy shooting the new season of "American Idol," his radio show on KISS-FM and hosting "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve." "Goodbyes are never easy, but we look forward to welcoming Ryan back regularly with open arms. As a fan-favorite guest

host for years, Mark is no stranger to the 'Live' family. Having him join the show is so special for us and we're sure that viewers will feel the same," Michael Gelman, executive producer of "Live with Kelly and Ryan," said in a statement.

"Live with Kelly and Ryan" on ABC is the No. 1 daytime talk show per household and in total viewership. Ripa has hosted "Live" since 2001, first with Regis Philbin and later with Michael Strahan. □

Shiffrin wins gold, thanks former coach after surprise split

By **ANDREW DAMPF and ERIC WILLEMSSEN**
Associated Press

MERIBEL, France (AP) — Mikaela Shiffrin covered her mouth with her fluorescent orange mittens and then collapsed to the snow, still breathing heavily as her entire body pulsed from the exertion of her gold medal-winning run.

What a relief after a hectic week for the American skier.

Having endured a small protest aimed at her by environmentalists who mistakenly thought she was using a helicopter for training, Shiffrin's team was thrown into disarray two days before the giant slalom at the world championships when her longtime coach, Mike Day, left suddenly when Shiffrin told him she wanted to change her staff at the end of the season.

"It's been definitely some high levels of stress these days," Shiffrin said. "It was very, very difficult today to keep the focus and keep the intensity on the right level."

Day had coached Shiffrin since 2016 and was with her for 65 of her 85 World Cup wins. Shiffrin needs just one more win to match Ingemar Stenmark's overall record of 86 victories, having already broken Lindsey Vonn's women's mark of 82 wins.

While wins at worlds don't



United States' Mikaela Shiffrin poses with the gold medal of the women's World Championship giant slalom, in Meribel, France, Thursday Feb. 16, 2023.

Associated Press

count toward the World Cup totals, that was the last thing on Shiffrin's mind Thursday.

"One thing I really want to say is just, 'Thank you,' to Mike for seven years of I can't even say helping me he's been such an integral part of my team and being there to support me through some of the most incredible moments in my career and some of the most challenging moments of my career and also my life," Shiffrin said, her voice cracking with emotion.

Shiffrin has now won two straight medals after taking silver in super-G, ending

an unfortunate run in major championship races. She didn't finish three of her five individual races at last year's Beijing Olympics and didn't win a medal despite enormous expectations then also didn't finish her first race at these worlds, when she straddled three gates from the finish of the combined to throw away what would have surely been gold.

Nobody on Shiffrin's personal team, which is also led by her mother, Eileen, who also coaches her, expected Day to react the way that he did.

"It's just a little bit sad how

it came down," Shiffrin said, adding that she was hoping to give Day "the time and the notice" to figure out his own plans before the end of the season but that his decision to leave immediately was "difficult for all of us to imagine" after "being such a tight group, really a family."

The entire skiing circuit is like a family, too, with rivals on the slopes often sleeping in the same Alpine chalets and sharing dinners as they travel together all winter on what is known as the "White Circus."

That tight-knit bond that the skiers feel for each

other was evident when Federica Brignone and Ragnhild Mowinckel rushed over to congratulate Shiffrin while she was still lying on the snow, then jumped on top of her.

Brignone finished a mere 0.12 seconds behind Shiffrin to take the silver, adding to the Italian's gold in combined, and Mowinckel of Norway finished 0.22 behind for the bronze.

French skier Tessa Worley, who was second after the opening run, slid on her inside ski and fell in her second run.

"I didn't want to go for a medal, I wanted to go for the win," said Worley, a two-time giant slalom world champion who had the added pressure of skiing in front of her home fans.

Brignone spent four days at home in bed with a fever before this race and has also been mourning former teammate Elena Fanchini, who died last week of a tumor at age 37.

"It's also been an emotional time for us," Brignone said.

Shiffrin won the giant slalom at the 2018 Olympics but this was her first world title in the discipline, making her only the fourth female skier to win world titles in four different disciplines, after previously winning four golds in slalom, one in super-G and the combined gold two years ago. □

Carlos Beltrán, let go as Mets manager, joins front office

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (AP) —

Carlos Beltrán is joining the Mets as a special assistant to general manager Billy Eppler, his first work with a team since he lost his job as New York's manager for his role in the Houston Astros' cheating scandal.

Beltrán was hired on Nov. 1, 2019, to replace Mickey Callaway as Mets manager.

The Mets announced Beltrán's departure the following Jan. 16 without his man-

aging a game.

Beltrán's departure was announced three days after he was the only Astros player mentioned by name in Major League Baseball's report that concluded the team broke rules by using electronics to steal signs en route to the 2017 World Series title.

Beltrán spent last season as an analyst on the New York Yankees' YES Network.

Now 45, the nine-time All-Star played with the Mets

from 2005-11 and is sixth on the team's career list for homers (149) and RBIs (559).

"I've known Carlos for many years, and I'm excited to add his unique perspective to our baseball operations team," Eppler said in a statement Thursday.

Beltrán was the 1999 AL Rookie of the Year with Kansas City. He also played for San Francisco, St. Louis and the Yankees. □



New York Mets' Carlos Beltrán smiles during an introductory baseball news conference in New York, Nov. 4, 2019.

Associated Press

Celtics remove interim tag, name Joe Mazzulla head coach

By **KYLE HIGHTOWER**
AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — The Boston Celtics named Joe Mazzulla their full-time head coach on Thursday, removing the interim tag he has held throughout the season after stepping in for Ime Udoka.

Udoka initially was given a yearlong suspension before training camp for having an inappropriate relationship with a woman in the organization. The 34-year-old Mazzulla, an assistant under Udoka last season, will now replace his former boss, who will not return. Mazzulla is the NBA's youngest head coach.

Terms of his new deal were not immediately released, but the team said his promotion does include a contract extension.

"As he has shown, Joe is a very talented coach and leader," Celtics president of basketball operations Brad Stevens said in a statement. "He has a unique ability to galvanize a room around a mission. We are thankful for the work he has done to help get us to this point and excited that he has agreed to lead us



Boston Celtics interim head coach Joe Mazzulla calls to his players during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Detroit Pistons, Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023, in Boston.

Associated Press

into the future." The Celtics beat the Pistons 127-109 on Wednesday night and head into the All-Star break leading the Eastern Conference with a 42-17 record. Mazzulla and his staff of assistants will coach Team Giannis the team that will be captained by Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo in the game Sunday at Salt Lake City. Jayson Tatum

and Jaylen Brown also garnered All-Star selections. Mazzulla, who is from Johnston, Rhode Island, was recognized as the Eastern Conference Coach of the Month for games played in October and November after leading the team to a league-best 18-4 record (.818).

He said Wednesday night that being on top of the

East at the unofficial halfway point of the season is something he would take the time to appreciate over the All-Star break enjoy it while also keeping an eye toward finishing the second half just as strongly. "It's there, you can't run away, you can't ignore it," he said. "I do think there is a comfort level knowing that. But that was kind of my

message to the guys. That at the same time you can't be too comfortable because when we get back, it picks right up. We have a responsibility to the work we put in to this point of the season to raise our level and play even better than we have been. So that's not the ultimate goal, but it's there and you have to acknowledge it and you have to embrace it."

Udoka, a longtime assistant who had been in his first NBA head coaching job, led Boston to a 51-31 record last season going 26-6 in the final 32 games. The Celtics then beat Brooklyn, Milwaukee and Miami on the way to the NBA Finals, where they lost to the Golden State Warriors in six games.

But before training camp, the Celtics banned Udoka for a full season over what two people with knowledge of the matter said was an improper relationship with a member of the organization. The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the team did not reveal that detail publicly. □

Hamlin: I meant no religious disrespect for wearing jacket



Buffalo Bills' Damar Hamlin walks on the field before the NFL Super Bowl 57 football game between the Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles, Sunday, Feb. 12, 2023, in Glendale, Ariz.

Associated Press

By **JOHN WAWROW**
AP Sports Writer

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin said Wednesday he never intended to offend

anyone for attending the Super Bowl wearing a jacket that critics deemed to feature an offensive depiction of Jesus.

"After talking with my

parents I understand how my coat could have offended some people," Hamlin wrote in a note posted on his Twitter account. "It was never my intentions to hurt or disrespect anyone, the coat is abstract art to me." Hamlin closed his two-post thread by saying he will continue to learn from the situation while adding: "My beliefs and Relationship with God is not tied to symbolic images."

The second-year player continues recovering after having to be resuscitated on the field after going into cardiac arrest during a game in Cincinnati six weeks ago created a stir for being pictured wearing a Kanye West Eternal Saint blue varsity jacket during

pregame ceremonies and sitting in NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell's box at the Super Bowl in Arizona on Sunday.

The back of the jacket featured an abstract illustration of Jesus on the cross under the word "ETERNAL." The front featured an abstract depiction of Jesus' face and appears to reference a Bible verse that reads: "Without end or beginning there is no day and no night."

Among the critics were former NFL running back Adrian Peterson, who referred to the jacket as "blasphemy" on Monday. A day later, Peterson wrote in an Instagram post that he has since cleared the air with Hamlin.

"After speaking with Damar, I have an understanding that it didn't come from a place of ill intent," Peterson wrote. "I apologize for offending you, I just felt offended in that moment as a man who loves and respects our Lord and Savior."

Hamlin, who received the NFLPA's Alan Page Community Award last week, took part in a pregame ceremony in which the NFL honored the Bills and Bengals training and medical staffs and first responders who treated the 24-year-old from the Pittsburgh area on the field, and the staff at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, where he spent nearly a week recovering. □